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# The CIA and its link to newsmen

In the coming weeks we may expect much news about Congress's \$350,000 (now marked down to \$150,000) probe to find out who leaked to CBS news correspondent Daniel Schorr a House committee intelligence report which cost taxpayers \$470,000 and which Congress wanted kept secret.

For a complete background necessary to understand all this, readers are referred to a long article by I. F. Stone in the April 1 issue of the New York Review of Books. Izzy tells you what you need to know about how things leak, why he thinks Schorr was right and Congress wrong, and what a "detailee" is. (He's a CIA man assigned to the executive or legislative branch.)

But while the Schorr case gets the headlines, something else will be going on that readers ought to know about, involving attempts to compel the CIA to disclose the names of all US news organizations and employees who have been or are working for the CIA.

And in this respect, the Globe's Ombudsman, quite used to criticizing others, has to confess an error of his own. In a column of Feb. 18 on the media and the CIA, we expressed doubt that the news media would make serious efforts to compel disclosure of the names.

We relied on a story in The Washington Post by Walter Pincus concerning two Feb. 4 meetings of CIA director George Bush with top officials of the CBS network and the New York Times, describing Walter Cronkite as "the only person who made a strong pitch to Bush that there should be full disclosure of past CIA connections with newsmen."

Since then, John B. Oakes, the New York Times's Editor of the Editorial Page, has written me the following concerning the Feb. 4 meeting with Bush in the office of Times publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger, at which Oakes was present:

"... The published report that any

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of the Times people there had condoned the CIA's employment of journalists in the past, or a *fortiori* in the present or future, is absolutely false. We in no sense gave the CIA a 'green light' on this subject, as implied in the Washington Post story."

So we checked with Clifton Daniel, Associate Editor of the Times, who heads its Washington Bureau. He confirmed that the Times is persisting in its attempts to obtain disclosure, but said, "The short answer is that I have had several responses (from the CIA) but no information."

The Times, he said, made two separate inquiries to the CIA. Daniel made one on Jan. 23 in a short letter to the CIA's Freedom of Information Coordinator, requesting names of foreign and American news organizations that have since 1947 "wittingly or unwittingly" allowed newspapermen to perform work for the CIA.

The reply, dated Jan. 29 said the CIA would search its records but asked if the Times would pay the fees. Daniel replied on Feb. 2 that he would pay the fees but assumed they would be small since the information sought had already been furnished to the Senate Intelligence Committee. The CIA coordinator answered, in a letter received Feb. 10, that the information was classified and, therefore, the CIA would not supply it. Daniel then turned the matter over to the Times's lawyers in New York.

Meanwhile, he had sent another letter to the CIA on Feb. 4 requesting the names of Times employees and stringers who "knowingly or unknowingly" had acted on behalf of the CIA. This request, Daniel said, was made for internal use, "to police our own people."

A similar request had also been made by Times Managing Editor A.M. Rosenthal. He had been told that none of the Times staff is being used by the CIA at the present time, but

the CIA would not comment on the past or on the present use of stringers or part-time correspondents. This was in a letter dated Feb. 9 from Bush to publisher Sulzberger, who had written to Bush after the Feb. 4 meeting.

The New York Times then decided to combine all of the requests in one letter. And again, the Times was turned down. While the newspaper abandoned its publisher's request, it persisted on the larger issue. Told that it could appeal to the CIA's "Information Appeal Committee" from the denial of the material sought, the Times filed such an appeal on March 11. The CIA acknowledged this in a letter received March 13 by Daniel, saying the appeal is now under consideration. On March 23, it still was.

As we said before, the issue is vital to the integrity of the media. And how far the matter will now be carried remains to be seen. But apart from further action by the New York Times, we can watch — and hope — for two other happenings.

One is the release, perhaps in mid-April, of the Senate Intelligence Committee report, though it has already been thrice postponed. Another is possible court action under the Freedom of Information Act. Jack Landau of the Washington-based Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press, tells us that any person or newspaper can bring suit under that law.

Since the CIA publicly promised last Feb. 11 to stop using, effective immediately, any foreign correspondents or stringers for US media, and since the public and media have an overriding interest in full disclosure and in unpolluted news, it is difficult to see how a CIA claim of either "classified material" or "national security" could stand up in court.

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